

General Order

Houston Police Department



ISSUE DATE:

March 15, 2017

NO.

600-03

REFERENCE: Supersedes all prior conflicting Circulars and Directives, and General Order 600-03, dated February 20, 2006

SUBJECT: GENERAL BROADCASTS

POLICY

The department shall maintain systematic guidelines for the origination, dissemination, and control of *General Broadcasts/Lookouts* and pickup information of suspects, vehicles, and missing persons. Guidelines shall also be maintained for Emergency Communications Division personnel concerning the broadcasts of all calls for service.

This General Order applies to all employees.

DEFINITIONS

Call for Service Broadcast. A means by which a dispatcher announces a call that is holding in a specific district or beat. It is intended solely for dispatching and managing calls for service and units. It is not considered a *General Broadcast/Lookout*.

General Broadcasts/Lookouts. Files in the Computer Aided Dispatch system that contain information about crimes, wanted persons, missing persons, or vehicles. They may have a general or specific interest to police operations.

Preliminary Pickup Information. Information relayed over the radio or via the Computer Aided Dispatch/Mobile Computing Device (CAD/MCD) systems prior to entering a complete *General Broadcast/Lookout*. Preliminary information is relayed as soon as possible to expedite the apprehension of suspects, the location of victims or missing persons, or the dissemination of critical information for the safety of officers.

1 BROADCASTS

General Broadcasts (or *Lookouts* in the CAD system) are intended to provide police officers and investigators information that may be essential to their safety and the apprehension of suspects. A *General Broadcast/Lookout* may be initiated by any of the following:

- a. Citizens (reporting incidents)
- b. HPD officers (responding to incidents)
- c. Other law enforcement agencies (reporting or responding to incidents)
- d. HPD Dispatch (receiving information from officers)
- e. Houston Emergency Center (HEC) call takers (receiving information from citizens)

Call takers at HEC may enter *General Broadcasts/Lookouts* on possible stolen vehicles or vehicles that may have been used in the commission of a crime. An entry should be made only after a call for service has been entered.

Dispatchers may enter *General Broadcasts/Lookouts* with information relayed to them from classified personnel. An entry shall be made only after an initial response by a unit on a call for service or on an on-viewed incident. Responding officers are in the best position to determine if information should be disseminated.

Transmitting Original Pickup Information

If the initial information regarding crimes such as aggravated robberies, kidnappings, assaults, auto thefts, or missing persons indicates the need for dissemination of *preliminary pickup information*, this information shall be provided over the radio immediately to the dispatcher and units. This information shall not be transmitted over the CAD/MCD systems as a *General Broadcast/Lookout* until the dispatcher has received more complete information via the telephone, the police radio, or the MCD system.

Once provided to the dispatcher, the complete pickup information shall be disseminated as a *General Broadcast/Lookout* and maintained in accordance with these guidelines. Records shall be kept in the CAD system on all *General Broadcast/Lookout* requests and transmissions.

If HEC call takers determine information received over the telephone should be broadcast immediately, they shall relay it to the appropriate dispatcher.

If information is received over the police radio or via the MCD system, dispatchers shall broadcast the preliminary information over their respective radio channel. If necessary, the information shall be forwarded to other dispatch positions for broadcasting over other channels.

Disseminating Complete Pickup Information

After complete information has been received and is ready for transmission as a *General Broadcast/Lookout*, the following steps shall be taken depending on the origin of the information:

- a. Call takers shall enter the information received into the CAD system. The preformatted *Lookout* form shall be used to enter this information. This applies only to calls for which a call for service has been entered.
- b. Police officers shall transmit over the police radio or the MobileCom system information they receive regarding vehicles, suspects, missing persons, etc. The dispatcher shall enter this information into the CAD system. The preformatted *Lookout* form shall be used.

After complete information has been entered into the CAD system, the computer automatically assigns a number to the *Lookout* and transmits the information to all applicable computer terminals.

If a *Lookout* regarding suspects or vehicles is disseminated over the CAD system, each dispatcher shall print the information and broadcast it over the air. The printout shall remain with

the dispatch position until the end of the shift and for the duration of the next shift or longer if necessary.

Stolen Vehicles and Suspect Vehicles in General Broadcasts/Lookouts

Vehicles may be involved in incidents in a variety of ways, but auto thefts are the most frequently reported incidents involving vehicles.

When vehicles are reported as stolen or used in the commission of a crime such as a robbery or burglary and a *General Broadcast/Lookout* for a vehicle is entered in CAD, the retention time for the *General Broadcast* shall be only one day.

It shall be the responsibility of the division investigating the incident or incidents to flag the vehicle(s) as wanted. In auto theft cases, once the report has been entered, vehicles shall be listed as possible stolen vehicles and a *Lookout* shall no longer be necessary.

A *General Broadcast/Lookout* shall be entered for possible stolen vehicles only when a call for service has been entered to obtain a response from a field unit or from the Teleserve Unit. If a call for service has not been entered into CAD, a *General Broadcast/Lookout* shall not be entered for the vehicle(s).

Responsibilities When Entering a Possible Stolen Vehicle

- a. HEC call takers shall enter a call for service for Teleserve. The call taker shall then enter a *Lookout* (LOO) into the CAD system.
- b. If physical evidence needs to be collected or the citizen requests an officer, the HEC call taker shall enter a call for service for a unit to be dispatched.
- c. All trailers (commercial, boat, utility, farm, moving, etc.) are processed as stolen vehicles. When reporting a trailer stolen, it is important for employees to obtain an adequate description of the trailer (e.g., vehicle identification number, color, number of wheels, general design, purpose).
- d. Only complete and verified license plates shall be entered in the license plate field of the *Lookout* form. When a plate is checked in CAD or on an MCD, the system shall first search the local files for information. Employees shall NOT list partial or possible plates in the license plate field of the *Lookout* form (e.g., CBW???). Partial plates shall be listed only in the text/narrative portion of the *Lookout* form.

If the information for a *General Broadcast/Lookout* is obtained from an officer, the officer's unit must be listed.

2 USE OF INFORMATION

Information from *General Broadcasts/Look-outs* or *preliminary pickup information* shall not be considered probable cause to arrest. Information received should be considered in conjunction with other information regarding the circumstances of the offense before any arrest decision is made.

3 RELATED GENERAL ORDERS

400-10, **Unit and Radio Numbering**
400-21, **Mobile Computing Devices**



Art Acevedo
Chief of Police